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## REVIEWS

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*Criminality and Economic Conditions.* By W. A. BONGER. Translated by HENRY P. HORTON, with an Editorial Preface by EDWARD LINDSEY and an Introduction by FRANK H. NORCROSS. (Modern Criminal Science Series.) Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1916. Pp. xxxi+706.

The present volume is one of a series selected for translation by the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology in order to make the best treatises in foreign languages accessible to English readers. The translation is based on the French edition of 1905, but it contains the latest corrections of the French text and a revised bibliography, and a few passages of a parenthetical nature have been omitted.

This is another attempt to reduce all social forces to one element, for the thesis of the book is that economic conditions are "sovereign" or "decisive" in the causation of crime. The author is not satisfied with the admission that economic conditions are very important, but insists on economic determinism in the original Marxian sense and contends that since this doctrine of economic determinism is winning ground consistently it needs no defense *in extenso*. By "economic conditions" he means, not merely poverty, but the entire system of producing wealth, which, also, is interpreted in the orthodox Marxian doctrines of class conflict, value, unemployment, concentration of capital, and increasing misery. This is therefore an orthodox socialist document and will be of interest to the student of socialism fully as much as to the criminologist.

This thesis in its strict form is, of course, impossible of verification. In the present state of development of socialist plans for the future, there is little value in the thesis for purposes of control, even if it could be verified. In addition, the author has a very peculiar idea of causation, since he contends that individual characteristics do not enter into the causation of crimes, though they may determine which individuals run the greatest risk of becoming criminals. The view is illustrated thus: "When two persons of different height are fording a river, and the shorter steps into a hole and is drowned, should we have the right to say that the difference between the height of persons is one of the reasons why

people are drowned? I think not. The only reason why there are people who are drowned is that a man cannot live in water, which in no way excludes the fact that a shorter person runs more danger of drowning than a tall one." Then he adds that if all women were equal there would still be the same amount of prostitution, which is equivalent to saying, in terms of his illustration, that if all bodies of water were equally deep (say, ten inches deep) there would still be the same number of people drowned. Such an "iron law" of crime is quite foreign to a serious attempt to determine the causes of crime.

But this book cannot be passed over lightly, for it is valuable in spite of its thesis, and the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology did not make a mistake in selecting it for translation. For it contains a large collection of statistical data regarding the relation between economic conditions and crime and unusually thorough interpretations of many details in this relationship. For that reason it is valuable both as an antidote to the legal doctrine of an inscrutable free will and as a supplement to the individual case-study method. In addition, more than a third of the book is devoted to a valuable critical review of the literature dealing with the relation between criminality and economic conditions.

E. H. SUTHERLAND

WILLIAM JEWELL COLLEGE

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*Truancy and Non-Attendance in the Chicago Schools: A Study of the Social Aspects of the Compulsory Education and Child Labor Legislation of Illinois.* By EDITH ABBOTT, PH.D., and SOPHONISBA P. BRECKINRIDGE, PH.D. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1917. Pp. xiii+472. \$2.00.

Like previous writings of the authors, this study is an admirable union of careful attention to, and interpretation of, numerical data and appreciation of the larger theoretical and human issues involved. Truancy and non-attendance in Chicago, it is recognized, are aspects of a series of problems including health and housing of children and adults, the moral standards of parents, the attitude of the prosperous classes to the welfare of wage-earning and immigrant groups, and the wage levels of unskilled labor. In order to offer adequate suggestions for the betterment of a bad situation in Chicago, the existence of which the authors frankly and conclusively prove, a long historical detour is made: the history of the struggle to attain free schools in Illinois, the struggle for